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Constituency re-demarcation a must after every census

EC counsel tells court
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission's (EC) counsel Advocate Mahmudul Islam yesterday told the High Court (HC) that the commission is constrained to delimit the parliamentary constituencies for the next parliamentary polls as per the constitutional rules.

He said as per Article 8(1) of the constitution, the EC has to delimit the parliamentary constituencies afresh before holding each general election and after each population census in the country, but the EC had not delimited the constituencies after the census in 2001.

He said the EC had no other options but to delimit the parliamentary constituencies this year.

Advocate Mahmudul Islam also said the EC had redrawn the constituencies following the rules of

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Go for nuke power to tackle outage

CPD dialogue asks govt to act on it right away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should immediately go for nuclear power to mitigate acute power crisis, which is hindering the country's economic growth, said speakers at a dialogue yesterday.

The speakers suggested setting up nuclear power plant in the wake of severe outage, as no power plant was established in the last seven years.

"It's imperative to introduce policies requisite for establishing nuclear power plant in Bangladesh immediately," said Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, permanent representative of Bangladesh to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and United Nations offices in

Geneva.

He stressed formation of an "independent regulatory body" which would separately provide regulatory supports to nuclear power sector so that it is not affected by existing complicated power system.

Debapriya's remarks came following a suggestion by M Asaduzzaman, research director of BIDS, who presented a keynote paper on "Energy for Development Options and Strategies for Bangladesh".

As Asaduzzaman made the recommendation, most of the participants including Dr M Tamim, chief adviser's special assistant for energy, supported it.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue

(CPD) and the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) organised the dialogue at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre.

CPD Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan chaired the discussion attended by power sector stakeholders, government officials and experts.

A debate on whether Bangladesh is ready for nuclear power melted when the chief adviser's special assistant and the chairman of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC) revealed their initiatives to set up a nuclear power plant.

"I have been encouraging the

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Tigers make it a match

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh turned the 'two-day' second and final Test against New Zealand into a contest after losing three unnecessary wickets late yesterday.

After rain washed out the first three days, it was expected that the remaining two days would be academic at best but Bangladesh ended the day on a disastrous 13 for three under fading light at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, after the visitors declared their first innings at 262 for six.

In the tenth over, opener Zunaed Siddiqui charged down the wicket, missed Daniel Vettori's first delivery and although there was a momentary lapse from wicketkeeper Brendon McCullum, Zunaed made a futile attempt to get back and was caught short by the Black Caps stumper for four.

When all expected a night-watchman or even a word into the umpires' ear for bad light, in walked Mohammad Ashraful and his dismissal to the New Zealand skipper was inevitable. Second

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Elderly hajj pilgrims queue up for health certificates as the government inaugurated Haji Camp in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

TAX EVASION

Charges framed against Mayor Mohiuddin

UNB, Ctg

A court here yesterday framed charges against Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury in a tax evasion case.

Judge SM Soliman of the Divisional Special Judge's Court framed the charges and fixed November 5 for recording depositions by prosecution witnesses.

Earlier on October 23, the court rejected a petition of Mohiuddin's counsel for discharging him from the case.

Ziaul Haque, additional commissioner of taxes, Chittagong, filed the case against the mayor on September 9 this year on charge of evading Tk 27.58 lakh income tax.

He alleged that Mohiuddin concealed information of wealth worth Tk 1.13 crore in his statement submitted to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Mayor Mohiuddin was released

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PHOTO: STAR

Residents of the city's Shahid Nagar in Lalbagh make their way through knee-deep water even after light rains that lead to severe waterlogging in the area.

5 cops asked to appear in court for assaulting shooter Asif

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court has summoned five police personnel to appear before it on February 4 next year in connection with the assault of three shooters, including Commonwealth Games gold medalist Asif Hossain Khan, on October 2, 2006.

The order followed a judicial enquiry into the attacks made by a metropolitan magistrate. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) AKM Enamul Haque passed the order on October 18.

The accused are Deputy Commissioner of police Obaidur Rahman Khan, the then officer-in-charge (OC) of Gulshan Police

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Shahid Nagar goes under water with a little rain

HELEMUL ALAM

Residents of Shahid Nagar in the city's Lalbagh area suffer waterlogging even in light rains as drains there are choked with garbage and can hardly carry away rainwater.

The irony is that the open drains laid on either side of the roads seven years back to improve waterlogging are now the main source of the problem.

In the absence of a sewerage system, many locals have linked their house sewers to the drains. Besides, some dump waste directly into the drains.

The drains were constructed after the natural reservoirs like

ponds and ditches had been filled up to make way for new houses.

Chunnu Mian, who lives on Road-3 in Shahid Nagar, said irresponsible dumping habits of fellow residents and indifference of the authorities to the situation defeats the purpose of the drains.

"As most of us have connected their sewer pipes with the drains, excreta and household waste make waterlogging even worse and expose us to serious health hazards," he observed.

His neighbour Mohammad Bacchu said the road goes under ankle- to knee-deep water even after 15 minutes of rain since the drains are almost blocked.

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Abdur Razzak Dewan, another resident, said the uncovered drains have also become the breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Ismail, who owns a house on Road-2, said a huge number of people use the road to go to places like Azimpur and Newmarket. But they have difficulty commuting during the rainy season as most roads remain submerged in fetid water.

Lima and Anki, students of Enam Children's Education High School, said going to school is quite an arduous task on rainy days as it requires them to wade knee-deep through waste-mixed floodwater. Besides, it is hard to

Confusion about 2 ex-PMs' poll contesting over

Says Adviser Zillur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday said "confusion over polls participation of former prime ministers Khaleida Zia and Sheikh Hasina is gone".

"We have already cleared doubts about the national election on December 18," he added.

He was speaking to reporters after attending a teachers' reunion at the city's Eden Girls' College.

Replying to a query, the adviser said the government has sorted out the problems regarding constituency re-demarcation through talks with the political parties. He however did not elaborate on the matter.

He observed, "Preparations for the polls are complete. We are ready to hand over power to those who will win the upcoming election."

Talking about his ministry, Zillur

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1 billion people to go hungry next year

UN expert warns against rising food price

AP, United Nations

Rising food prices will push the number of hungry people in the world over one billion next year, a UN expert warns.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation reported in September that at least 925 million people are hungry in the world today, compared with 848 million between 2003 and 2005, said

Oliver De Schutter, the UN Human Rights Council's independent expert on the right to food.

"But the data relates to the beginning of 2008, and since then the estimate is that at least 44 million more people have become hungry," he said.

"So we are now closer to the billion - and with a bit more effort

we'll arrive at the billion by next year."

De Schutter told reporters after briefing the UN General Assembly's human rights committee yesterday that rising prices and increasing hunger are driving the world "far away" from achieving the UN goal of reducing extreme poverty by half by 2015.

"The situation of hunger in the world is alarming," said de Schutter, a law professor at the University of Louvain in Belgium and currently a visiting professor at Columbia University's Law School in New York.

"The prices of food commodities on international markets have been going down since they reached a peak in June 2008, when the level of real food prices was 64

per cent above their levels of 2002," he said.

"But prices on domestic markets remain at historically high levels."

In many countries, especially developing nations that import food, he said, "the brutal increase in prices in 2007 and the first half of 2008 has left severe marks on the poorest households."

Families have reduced the quantity of food they eat and switched to poorer diets, and they have cut back on health care and schooling, "leading to irreparable damage to the health and education of millions of children," de Schutter said.

But he said the food crisis has also provided governments and

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US poll race enters nail-biting final week

Obama killing plot uncovered: 2 held

US POLLS
6 DAYS TO GO

AFP, St David's

Two white supremacists have been arrested for threatening to kill Barack Obama in a chilling twist revealed by officials as the race for the White House headed for its final seven days.

Daniel Cowart, 20, and Paul Schlesselman, 18, were arrested last week in Tennessee for possession of firearms, threats against a candidate running for president

and conspiring to rob a gun store, the Department of Justice said.

The men began "discussing going on a 'killing spree' that included killing 88 people and beheading 14 African Americans," Brian Weeks, an agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives told a Memphis court Monday.

"They further stated that their final act of violence would be to attempt to kill/assassinate presidential candidate Barack Obama," he added, as the two men appeared before the federal court.

The case is likely to heighten fears for Democrat candidate Obama's safety as he bids to defeat Republican opponent John McCain to become the first black US president in history in next Tuesday's elections.

He is already under secret service protection having received it much earlier in the campaign than any other presidential candidate. His campaign team declined to comment on the news.

The White House rivals were to hold competing rallies Tuesday in the rust-belt state of Pennsylvania before splitting, with McCain

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Syria closes US centre after raid

Iraq slams American strike

AFP, Damascus

Syria decided yesterday to close the US cultural centre and the American school in Damascus after a deadly US raid on a village near the Iraqi border, the state news agency SANA reported.

Damascus has said the eight people killed in Sunday's assault were all civilians, including children, and it has branded the raid -- the first confirmed US action of its kind inside Syrian territory -- a "terrorist" act.

The Syrian cabinet in a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Mohammed Naji Otri called for the education and culture ministers to take the necessary measures to

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Mufti Hannan remanded in abduction case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Harkatul Jihad (Huji) chief Mufti Abdul Hannan on a two-day remand in a case filed for kidnapping a physician in the capital's Mirpur in September 2003.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Mominul Hassan passed the order after the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) produced Hannan before the court with a three-day remand prayer.

Homeopathic physician Azizur Rahman, who lived on Mazar Road at Mirpur, was kidnapped on

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Govt role favoured extremism

Allege protesters of sculpture removal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Further delay by the caretaker government regarding reinstallation of sculptures of bauls removed recently from the airport area would only confirm the government's patronisation of extremist politics in the country, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

Referring to the government's role in removing the sculptures in face of demonstrations, speakers said every action appears to be a move to establish anti-liberation forces in power through the upcoming election.

Ekkattor Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee organised the discussion meeting titled "Fundamentalist aggression against Art and Culture" at the Woman's Voluntary Association (WVA) in the city yesterday afternoon.

The participants of the discussion were referring to the recent

demonstrations by madrasa students to bring down sculptures form a city point, adverse remarks made by Amir Noor Hossain Nurani and Fazlul Huq Amini regarding the incident and related developments.

Pointing out instances of the use of religious extremism in the administration, economy, culture, and politics over the years since the nation's independence, the speakers observed that the political party Jamaat-e-Islami is all set to take over state power by 2015 using religion as a platform.

The speakers call on all people to unite against these anti-liberation forces and use the coming election to eliminate those using religion to create divisions among people.

Prof Muntasir Mamun said, "Unless they had been given special assistance, the madrasa

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15 hurt by land grabbers during eviction drive

A CORRESPONDENT, Narayanangj

At least 15 people including a photojournalist and 13 officials of Narayanangj municipality were injured in an attack by land grabbers during an eviction drive on Mir Jumla Road in Narayanangj yesterday.

Six municipality vehicles were also damaged in the incident.

Later, municipality officials with the help of police demolished the illegal structures set up about 22 years ago.

The municipality officials along with local councillors went to Mir Jumla Road on Monday to demolish illegal structures on both sides of the road.

When the shop owners under the banner of Narayanangj Nagorik Committee requested the councillors and municipality officials to give them time to move the shops elsewhere, they asked the shop owners to remove the illegal structures by 10:00am yesterday.

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PHOTO: STAR

Land grabbers attack municipality officials at Mir Jumla Road in Narayanangj yesterday during an eviction drive, leaving 15 people injured.

No trace yet of abducted Brac officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Frustration grips the families of two Brac officials abducted in Ghazni province of Afghanistan on Thursday as their whereabouts are still unknown.

Six days into the abduction, Brac officials in Dhaka yesterday said neither the Afghan authorities nor their office in Afghanistan can say where Akhter Ali and Mohammad Shahjahan Ali have been kept or who are their abductors.

"Can anyone tell me what they are doing to my son? I cannot bear it anymore... Maybe they are beating up my son," Afsana Khatun Lily, Akhter's mother, broke down in tears while talking to this correspondent yesterday.

Since the abduction, the mother almost every day sits quiet holding a photograph of Akhter at her other son Ashraf Ali Palashi's house in Mohammadpur.

The Brac officials' assurance of

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